

# UNCLE SAM OWES YOU!!

To help veterans receive the federal and state benefits they have earned, Wisconsin's Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Raymond G. Boland recently launched the "I OWE YOU" campaign, featuring a poster of Uncle Sam that was used during World War I to recruit soldiers. The message from Uncle Sam to veterans is: "Just as I came looking for you, now you can contact me."

Wisconsin ranks near the bottom of all states in the amount of federal benefits received by its veterans. This campaign is designed to help Wisconsin veterans obtain federal benefits and to access an array of state veterans' benefits provided by the WDVA. While most veterans know about veterans' hospitals, following are some lesser known benefits that are available.

## **State Veterans Benefits**

The WDVA operates the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King (Waupaca County), which offers skilled nursing care and a quality retirement environment. A veterans' home near Union Grove will open in 2001. The new home will have community based residential facilities for veterans and their spouses. In the future, a skilled nursing care facility, adult day care, and other services will be added. Other WDVA programs include:

**State Veterans Cemeteries** that provide free interment for eligible veterans and their families are located near Union Grove and King. There is also a new veterans' cemetery near Spooner to serve northern Wisconsin.     > > >

- **Wisconsin Military Honors Program:** Using military resources, veterans' groups, and WDVA teams, this new program provides military honors for veterans' funerals.
- **Loans:** Home and personal, education grants, and job training assistance are all offered by the WDVA. See the website for details: <http://dva.state.wi.us>.

**Federal Benefits:** WDVA county veterans' service offices also help veterans obtain federal VA benefits, including the VA health system (clinics and hospitals). Both state and federal regulations have changed through the years, so veterans who in the past were not eligible may be now. These include:

**Pension:** Veterans or their surviving spouses with low incomes or high medical payments (including nursing home) may be eligible for benefits if the veteran had 90 days or more of active military service, of which one day was during a wartime period. The veteran must be permanently and totally disabled. Payments are made to qualified veterans to bring their total income, including other retirement and Social Security, to a level set by Congress.

**Disability compensation:** Veterans who are disabled by injury or disease incurred or aggravated while in military service may receive tax-free payments monthly. Veterans currently receiving disability compensation may receive larger payments if their condition worsens.

**For more information** about state and federal veterans' benefits, call 1-800-947-8387 or contact your county's veterans' service office (listed in the phone book under county government). The county veterans' service office (CVSO) also can help veterans or their family members obtain discharge records, military documents, awards, and decorations.